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Stuart, Henry Carter

Address of
Hon. Henry Carter Stuart

Richmond, Va.

1915

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of

HON. HENRY CARTER STUART

GOVERNOR of VIRGINIA

DELIVERED AT THE

Panama-Pacific International Exposition
San Francisco

VIRGINIA DAY, JULY 8, 1915

PUBLISHED BY

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Address of Governor Stuart

Ladies and Gentlemen:

We have crossed the continent, two hundred strong, to bring you the congratulations and good wishes of Old Virginia; her assurances that the ties of friendship and kinship are not weakened by distance; that the impulse of a common patriotism is not divided or lessened by mountain ranges, great lakes or broad rivers. In the name of Virginia I thank you for the cordial California welcome that has met us on every hand, and for the abounding hospitality with which we have been honored; for the generous and cordial words in which you have expressed the feeling of your own people and of your own heart. We come from the oldest of the States, the State on whose soil the first English speaking settlement of the great New World was established; from the home of the first germ of our civilization and government to a land where the hopes and dreams of three centuries ago have found fair and glorious fruition.

When a little company of English speaking people at Jamestown were yet in the cradle of this great Republic, when three thousand miles of water already traversed lay between them and their native home, their first yearning was for a western ocean, and their first cry was for the possession of the unknown land, the far spread trackless wilderness that would stretch the boundary of Virginia from ocean to ocean.

The charter of 1609 fixed the metes and bounds of Virginia as "200 miles northward from Old Point Comfort and 200 miles southward from Old Point Comfort all along the sea coast and up into the land throughout from sea to sea, west and northwest, and all the islands lying in 100 miles of the sea coast." For more than 150 years Virginia rested on this paper title, and only as the war of the Revolution was closing an expedition composed of Virginians under command of George Rogers Clarke was organized and equipped by Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, and sent on the perilous mission of taking possession of the vast territory between the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers, being all that was then left of the original domain under the terms of a treaty between the Mother Country and Spain. The Mississippi Valley, a very empire in itself, was by this expedition won and saved to the nation, for it was held by Virginia against England, subsequently ceded by Virginia to the Union, and constitutes the territory now occupied by the Middle States. Not content with this limitation of our territory, Thomas Jefferson negotiated the Louisiana purchase, and thus

drove the stakes which extended our western border still further toward the Pacific, there to remain for nearly half a century. The Mexican war and its results brought us this beautiful land, and with it the complete fulfillment for the nation of the dream of the little Virginia colony for itself.

The star of empire had at last reached the limit of its westward course in the waters of the Pacific, leaving us the huge possession, out of which State after State has been carved, until forty-eight stars emblazon the national emblem as it floats the insignia of honor and power from sea to sea.

United as Virginia and California now are by vast systems of transcontinental communication, drawn together by the ties that bind State to State, there is the yet closer tie which springs from Virginia's motherhood of thousands of sons and daughters who have become by your generous adoption loyal Californians. For the filial devotion of these, her children, Virginia returns the fullest measure of maternal love and pride, rejoicing that it has been her privilege to give of her flesh and blood to the upbuilding of your great Commonwealth. In spirit we feel peculiarly near to you, and no expanse of rolling prairie, no height of snowy peak, no far-flung barrier of mountains, can separate you from Virginia, whose people glory in your youthful vigor and your matchless resources.

Imagination revelled in the prospect of all that we should behold in your land of wonders, but the reality has far exceeded our anticipations. Truly on California has been lavished the treasures of earth and sea and sky. The elusive pot of gold is attached to your rainbows, and in the alchemy of science the philosopher's stone has become, not a product of the crucible, but the sparkling water, which pours its healing balm upon the plain, transmitting the arid waste into golden fields of grain or the richer harvest of your orchards and vineyards.

With reverence we bow in the presence of your mighty trees, oldest of living things, and trace the fleeting centuries they recall.

With awe we gaze upon the canyons colored through endless ages by sunlight and shadow while the stream cuts its way silently through the rock, an image of the triumph of unceasing effort.

With delight we view the rippling waters of your bay, making a shining pathway for the commerce of the world, and overwhelmed by the majesty of nature as revealed in her varied manifestations, we humbly exclaim, "Who is like unto thee, O people, blessed by the living God!"

The Panama Exposition, magnificent in conception and execution, is a fitting celebration of the greatest engineering accomplishment in all history, marking, as has been well said, the greatest liberty man has ever taken with nature. It brings California and Virginia close together by water, makes Hampton Roads and the

Golden Gate neighbors. Its opening hastens the day when the Orient will take its stand by the Occident in all that tends to progress and development, when the two will be working together for all that makes the world better and lifts humanity closer to divinity, when nations that have been sleeping for centuries will be aroused from their lethargy and will become potent factors in an unceasing stream of international traffic on the Pacific Ocean, which will make it a highway of trade rivalling in importance that of the Atlantic.

The dream of Thomas Jefferson was that this country should become a refuge for the oppressed of all nations, but we cherish the brighter hope that through the spread over the earth of American ideals oppression and war shall cease, and that the fundamental right of mankind to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness shall be universally recognized. On such eternal foundations, broad as humanity, lofty as heaven itself, rests a potential reason for the Panama Canal, the completion of which we make memorable here.

The Pyramids commemorate the Pharoahs, the Taj Mahal immortalizes an undying love, the Suez Canal brought fame to de Lesseps, the Alpine tunnels are marvels, the Kiel Canal is a monument to German foresight, but the Panama Canal is greater than them all, not alone because it is the supreme triumph of the genius of our race, but because it is the greatest contribution of all time to the means of communication between the nations of the earth. It represents an enormous investment held by the United States primarily for its own purposes, but held also in trust for the benefit of the world, and as such it incarnates a new and vital thought, derived not from precedents and diplomatic notes of premiers, but from the heart of a great people, seeking to bring us closer together not only in trade and commerce, but in sympathy and common striving for the betterment of mankind.

In Spanish romance California of old is located near the terrestrial Paradise. Surely the wonderful parks of San Francisco sloping down to the azure waves, the myriad courts of your exposition buildings filled with treasures from every clime, the jeweled splendor of your towers, the airy grace and dazzling richness of your domes and minarets surpass the fabled loveliness of that land of mystery and seem the embodiment of the fairest fancies of poet, painter and sculptor.

Such is the splendid vision that greets our eyes in a city which has risen in statelier beauty from a fire which less than a decade ago desolated its high places.

Distance forbade us to send to your exposition an elaborate exhibit of Virginia's resources. We have sent you, however, in highly condensed form, a collection of the products of a single Virginia farm, showing possibilities both in variety and value, thus

demonstrating versatility of soil and climate unsurpassed by any State in the Union, all from Virginia land, which we venture to assert represents a higher degree of immediate and ultimate productivity and earning power in proportion to purchase money cost than any now left on this continent.

We bring you from Virginia not only greeting and assurance of good will and maternal affection, but tribute to your glorious courage and thanks for the service you have done America and the world. Confronted with a calamitous war, involving eleven of the nations of the earth, which deprived you of exhibits and attendance you had every right to expect, you have illustrated the best and highest fortitude of our race; you have turned disaster into victory and furnished an inspiring example of the triumph of exalted courage and indomitable will and energy; you have wrought wonderfully; you have conquered splendidly; you have won admiration and gratitude never to be forgotten.

May the promised blessing of this hour flow in unceasing volume on your shores and find their high tide in the Golden Gate.

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